

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-07

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FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2265

C O N F I D E N T I A L NEW DELHI 15230

FOLLOWING MSG CALCUTTA 2712 DTD 15 NOV 75 RCVD NEW DELHI BEING
REPEATED TO YOU. QUOTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L CALCUTTA 2712

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-4

TAGS: PFOR, MPOL, IN, BG

SUBJ: GENERAL JACOB DENIES INTENTION OF INDIAN MILITARY
INVOLVEMENT IN BANGLADESH

1. DURING CONVERSATION AT SOCIAL FUNCTION EVENING NOVEMBER 14
I ASKED GENERAL JACOB HOW HE VIEWED THE SITUATION IN BANGLADESH.
JACOB INDICATED FULL AWARENESS OF THE MUTINY AND SAID HE WAS
FOLLOWING THE FIGHTING BETWEEN VARIOUS ARMY UNITS AND OTHER
GROUPS BY MONITORING THE BANGLADESH ARMY'S INTERNAL COMMUNICA-
TIONS NETWORK. I ASKED IF THE DISORDERS HAD PROMPTED HIM TO
MODIFY HIS FORCE DISPOSITIONS AND HE SAID NO, HE HAD NOT MOVED
A SINGLE SOLDIER AND HAD NO INTENTION OF DOING SO. JACOB SAID
THAT AS HE HAD TOLD ME EARLIER HE HAD ONLY THREE BATALIONS IN
THE VICINITY OF THE BANGLADESH BORDER, AND "YOU KNOW YOU DON'T
INVADE A COUNTRY WITH THREE BATTALIONS."

2. JACOB SAID BANGLADESH ARMY INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS WERE
SAYING "ALL SORTS OF FOOLISH THINGS" ABOUT INDIAN ARMY INTER-
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VENTION. "THEY ARE SAYING THAT MY TROOPS HAVE BEEN OVER THERE,

THAT WE ENTERED THEIR TERRITORY AND DUG TRENCHES, AND THAT WE ARE PLANNING TO INVAD E THEM WITH TANKS." JACOB SAID HE LAUGHED WHEN HE GOT THESE REPORTS. HE SAID HE COULD ASSURE ME THAT THEY WERE ABSOLUTELY NOT TRUE. THE ONLY TANKS HE HAD ANYWHERE NEAR THE BANGLADESH BORDER WERE A FEW VERY OLD ONES WITH A BATTALION IN TRIPURA. I ASKED WHAT ABOUT INDIAN BORDER SECURITY FORCES, TO WHICH JACOB ANSWERED THAT THEY WERE IN PLACE AS USUAL BUT TO THE BEST OF HIS KNOWLEDGE HAD NOT BEEN MILITARILY ENGAGED. THEY HAVE NO TANKS OR HALF TRACKS, HE SAID, NOTHING HEAVIER THAN ARMORED JEEPS. JACOB SAID BANGLADESH FORCES WERE FIGHTING THEIR OWN PEOPLE OR PERHAPS UNIDENTIFIED INSURGENTS, BUT NOT INDIANS.

3. JACOB AGAIN ASSURED ME - HE SAID I GIVE YOU MY WORD AND YOU CAN QUOTE ME ON IT - THAT NEITHER HIS FORCES NOR, AS FAR AS HE KNEW, INDIAN BORDER SECURITY FORCES HAD BEEN ENGAGED MILITARILY ALONG THE BANGLADESH BORDER AND THAT HE HAD NO PRESENT INTENTION OF GOING INTO BANGLADESH. WE WOULD HAVE TO BE MADMEN TO GO IN THERE, JACOB SAID, THE ONLY THING THAT WOULD MAKE US DO IT WOULD BE IF THE HINDUS WERE IN SERIOUS TROUBLE. IT DOESN'T MATTER WHAT THE POLITICAL COMPLEXION OF THE REGIME IS, JACOB SAID, WE DON'T LIKE HAVING THE PAKISTANIS AND THE CHINESE THERE BUT THAT IS NOT A REASON FOR INVADING BANGLADESH.

4. LATER IN THE EVENING JACOB TOOK ME ASIDE AND REPEATED SEVERAL TIMES THAT HE HAD NO INTENTION OF BECOMING INVOLVED IN BANGLADESH. SO STRONG WAS HIS FEELING ON THIS THAT WHEN I POINTED OUT THAT A DECISION ON INTERVENTION WOULD BE MADE IN DELHI HE BRUSHED THIS ASIDE WITH A WAVE OF THE HAND AND A REMARK THAT SUGGESTED THAT HE EXPECTED HIS VIEWS ON SUCH MATTERS TO PREVAIL.

5. COMMENT: WHILE GENERAL JACOB MAY NOT BE AWARE OF EVERYTHING THE INDIAN GOVERNMENT IS DOING OR PLANNING REGARDING BANGLADESH, I SEE NO REASON TO DOUBT THAT HE WAS TELLING THE TRUTH AS HE KNOWS IT. HIS INSISTENCE THAT THERE HAD BEEN NO INDIAN MILITARY ACTION AND THAT NONE IS CONTEMPLATED MAY SEEM OVERDONE AND PERHAPS A BIT PUZZLING, BUT HE PUT HIS CREDIBILITY SQUARELY ON THE LINE.

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